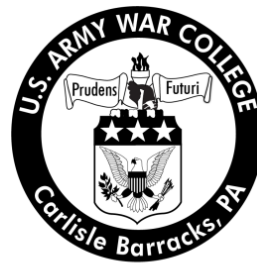


The Strategic Shift to the Asia-Pacific and the U.S. Army

by

Lieutenant Colonel Guy Brynt Parmeter
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United States Army War College
Class of 2012

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THE STRATEGIC SHIFT TO THE ASIA-PACIFIC AND THE U.S. ARMY

by

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By 2010, the global financial crisis and the costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan served as clear signals that the U.S. had arrived at a strategic inflection point warranting a new approach to national prosperity and security. As a result, in early 2012, President Obama directed the Asia-Pacific region as the national priority for the investment of diplomatic, economic, and strategic time and energy. Within the Department of Defense, the U.S Army is the proponent for operations on land. As such, the Army must adjust course from its previous focus in the Middle-East to the Asia-Pacific region to ensure that it is organized, trained, and equipped to effectively support the strategic shift. The principal challenge for the Army will be to conduct the requisite activities associated with the strategic shift under fiscally austere conditions. The Army Chief of Staff and other senior leaders have offered several initiatives towards this end to include structure and force generation adjustments and regionally aligning brigade combat team formations. These preliminary approaches will enable the Army to embark on a fiscally responsible path to advance national interests in the Asia-Pacific.

THE STRATEGIC SHIFT TO THE ASIA-PACIFIC AND THE U.S. ARMY

National defense policy is more like an aircraft carrier than a speed boat. A speed boat can make sharp turns quickly and course changes follow inputs nearly immediately. The speed of the turn and forward progress can be adjusted easily. Conversely, making a large ship like an aircraft carrier change course takes time and requires input prior to the point where the turn must occur. The inertia of a large ship also makes it maintain a course in the same direction it is already moving. A ship also requires a much greater input to make course corrections to speed or direction. Similarly, it is an inherently cumbersome endeavor to change policy direction and the results are quite significant when they occur. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 changed the course of United States national defense policy. These attacks spurred a decade of United States defense policy focused on the prosecution of the Global War on Terror. Hundreds of thousands of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines have deployed to the Middle East in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Department of Defense has adopted a new force structure and business model to meet these security challenges. The National Guard and Reserve forces have deployed overseas at an unprecedented rate that threatens the viability of the current force structure. Despite the established inertia achieved to accomplish the U.S. national objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan, the nation once again is preparing to change the focus of defense policy.

In January 2012 President Obama issued new defense policy guidance, effectively charting a new course for the metaphorical aircraft carrier. His course deviates from the sunk costs involved in engagement in the Middle East, to a new

course focused on the application of power in the Asia-Pacific region. Within the Department of Defense, the U.S. Army is the proponent for operations on land. As such, the Army must adjust to this course change to ensure that it is organized, trained, and equipped to meet the opportunities and challenges associated with this new policy. This paper will explore these opportunities and challenges and provide some strategic recommendations.

Towards this end, the paper begins with a broad explanation of the global financial crisis and then provides a strategic assessment of the Asia-Pacific region and why the administration considers the region critical to U.S. long-term prosperity and security interests. The paper then employs the Diplomacy, Development, and Defense framework to discuss the opportunities the U.S. Army provides to the U.S. Pacific Command to accomplish its wide range of missions in support of U.S. policy. The paper then discusses several challenges the U.S. Army must overcome as it executes the transition from its current focus to the Asia-Pacific and concludes with several associated recommendations.

The Global Financial Crisis

Andrew Grove, one of the three founders of the Intel Corporation, defines a strategic inflection point in his 1996 book, *Only the Paranoid Survive*, as “when the balance of forces shifts from the old structure, from the old ways of doing business and the old ways of competing, to the new.”¹ He further explains that, “an inflection point occurs where the old strategic picture dissolves and gives way to the new.”² He offered that the signals indicating the presence of an inflection point vary but that it is imperative, “to wake up and listen.”³ By 2010, the global conditions had changed dramatically from the conditions existing in 2001. The costly wars in Iraq and

Afghanistan had diminished U.S. strength and a global financial crisis threatened the world economy. These conditions served as resounding signals that the U.S. had arrived at a strategic inflection point.

By 2008, a financial crisis spanned much of the globe. While the U.S. and many other nations wrestled with fiscally driven austerity challenges, the Asia-Pacific states maintained relatively prosperous economies. Many experts attribute the global economic decline to the growing U.S. debt, itself a product of several factors including: a drop in middle class income, reckless commercial lending practices, and the subsequently high default rates on subprime mortgages.⁴ Others cite the European Union and their fiscal banking challenges as a primary contributor to the global economic downturn.⁵ Regardless of how it started, these variables caused extensive losses for major financial institutions.⁶ To prevent bankruptcy of these commercial institutions, the U.S. and Europe provided billions of dollars in taxpayer provided financial assistance to these corporations. These problems reduced international trade and increased worldwide unemployment.⁷

Nations adversely affected by the crisis wrestled with various austerity measures to curb government spending and allow for lower burdens of public debt without severe tax increases.⁸ For the U.S., this difficult challenge resulted in the Budget Control Act of 2011 that legislated ten successive years of mandated cuts to the federal budget focused on reducing the national deficit.⁹ The mandated cuts are projected to reduce the deficit from a high of \$1.2 trillion in 2009 to \$470 billion by 2017.¹⁰ This budget legislation mandates cuts in defense spending which increased by approximately by nearly \$16 billion in 2013 and a total of \$486.9 billion through 2021.¹¹

The costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were significant by any measure, and served as one of the primary signals indicating the arrival at a strategic inflection point. A July, 2009 Congressional Research Service Report titled *Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars* concluded that the U.S. was paying approximately \$200 billion per year to deploy, maintain, and sustain the 200,000 U.S. troops serving in the Middle East.¹² These high costs increased U.S. deficit spending and were increasingly detrimental to U.S. economic conditions given the other sources of the financial crisis.

In the January, 2012 defense policy document, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, President Obama recognized the security risks of increased deficit spending and placed the financial crisis as one of the central components of the strategic inflection point. He stated, “We must put our fiscal house in order here at home and renew our long term economic strength.”¹³ Surprisingly, the Asia-Pacific region had weathered the global economic crisis relatively well and had gone largely unaffected by the dire economic trends. In fact, the region had prospered during this same period leading the President to declare it time “to focus on a broader range of challenges and opportunities, including the security and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific.”¹⁴ The President’s statements were a clear mandate that the future direction of U.S. defense policy pointed away from the costly endeavors in the Middle East and in the direction of growth in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific Region

Two fundamental reasons why the Asia-Pacific region stands atop the U.S. list of geostrategic priorities were articulated by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in her 2011 Foreign Policy article, “America’s Pacific Century”. She set the stage for the President’s declared policy shift stating, “Our economic recovery at home will depend on exports

and the ability of American firms to tap into the vast and growing consumer base of Asia.”¹⁵ Furthermore, she argued that the U.S. must facilitate peace and security throughout the Asia-Pacific region as, “increasingly crucial to global progress.”¹⁶ She described several other reasons for the regions importance:

The region contains the key engines of the global economy, it boasts half of the world’s population, the Indian and Pacific Oceans are key drivers of global politics linked by shipping and strategy, and the open markets in Asia provide the U.S. with unprecedented opportunities for investment and trade.¹⁷

Concurrent with these promising economic opportunities, the region simultaneously warrants U.S. security engagement to serve as a balance of power to the regional hegemonic aspirations of China and to assuage the security anxieties of our long standing allies and partners in the region.

Among the nations in the Asia-Pacific region, the United States, China, and Japan rank atop economic strength indicator lists to include the World Bank and the CIA World Fact Book with Gross Domestic Products at fourteen, ten, and four trillion dollars respectively.¹⁸ Additionally, China is the world’s fastest growing economy with an annual growth rate of nearly ten percent over the past thirty years.¹⁹ This growth rate is strategically relevant in of itself, when combined with military power assessments, Japan drops from the list and the U.S. and China remain alone as the most powerful nations in the region. Although China does not maintain the same degree of power projection capability as the U.S., it does have a large military force, numbering approximately 1.25 million personnel, and maintains an extensive nuclear arsenal.²⁰ Furthermore, China ranks second in the world in total military spending and the two countries are the only ones that spend over one hundred billion a year on defense.²¹ Beyond these side by side comparisons, the real strategic relevance is the relationship

between the two countries and the impact this relationship has on prosperity and security throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

The U.S. and China have arrived at an inextricable point of economic interconnectedness. The U.S. tops the list of Chinese trading partners which also includes several other Asia-Pacific regional neighbors including Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore. On the other hand, China ranks second to Canada on the U.S. list of trade partners with Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan among the other countries on the U.S. top ten trading partners. Given the interconnected economic nature of the strategic environment, neither the U.S. nor China can exercise its various elements of power without affecting the other or the neighboring countries in the region.

Beyond economic interconnectedness, an examination of Chinese core interests further illuminates the strategic dilemma for the U.S. and the other nations throughout the region. M. Taylor Fravell, an acknowledged expert on China, summarizes Chinese interests in a 2011 *Asian Security* article: "Economic Growth, Regime Insecurity, and Military Strategy: Explaining the Rise of Noncombat Operations in China."²² He stated, "Internal security and domestic political order, widening the scope of regional stability to include a global dimension, and expanding Chinese access to resources necessary for continued economic growth."²³ Due to both the global dimension and expanding resource requirements, China's growing influence in the Asia-Pacific places it in competition with the U.S. and other nations in the region. Specifically, Carlyle Thayer, an Emeritus Professor at the Australian Defense Force Academy in his article, "China's Rise and the Passing of U.S. Primacy: Australia Debates it's Future", argued that "his

nation finds itself in a previously unknown position where its key ally is no longer its major trading partner.”²⁴ This phenomenon occurred in 2007 when China overtook the United States as Australia’s largest trading partner.²⁵ This situation is not unique in the region and this drop in economic, and subsequently strategic influence, directly contributes to the President’s policy direction towards the Asia-Pacific region.

With similar logic to the that of the post World War II period when the U.S. established its prosperity azimuth on European stability and economic growth, the U.S. now looks to the Asia-Pacific region for the potential to positively influence international and domestic prosperity in the 21st Century.²⁶ Consequently, the prosperity azimuth must be pursued in tandem with security and stability. This mutually inclusive dynamic between prosperity and security is highlighted by Zheng Wang, in his *Asia Policy* article, “American Conspiracy: Strategic Suspicion and U.S. Reengagement in Asia.” He highlighted the fact that most countries in the region have established economic development as their first priority and have been able to do so in large part due to decades of security and stability in the region and the good relations both with and between the economically and militarily larger powers: the U.S. and China.²⁷

While the U.S. must engage in the region towards prosperity and security, it must do so in a way that limits the degree of confrontation with China. Antagonism between the U.S. and China may force regional states that maintain open relations with both countries to take sides in favor of one or the other. This may create an “either-or” or “lose-lose” situation for the smaller nations whereby they would have to sacrifice economic pursuits, security, or both.²⁸ Simply put, it would be economically disadvantageous and counter to the prosperity interests of both the U.S. and China if

relations between the two deteriorated. Mitigating this possibility must be a central factor in the U.S. strategic calculus as it charts the course to expanding both prosperity and its security influence in the region.

The U.S strategic approach in the Asia-Pacific has six key lines of action defined by Secretary Clinton: strengthening bilateral security alliances, forging a broad-based military presence, deepening relations with emerging powers, including China, engaging within regional multilateral institutions, expanding trade and influence, and advancing human rights.²⁹ These lines of action span the realm of both the State and Defense Departments. The Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of the Army, and Army Chief of Staff have all discussed the policy shift to the Asia-Pacific region in various forums and guidance documents. An examination of these discussions highlights the foundational context that the U.S. Army will stand upon as it supports the broader U.S. efforts in the region.

Defense Leadership Guidance and the Policy Shift to the Asia-Pacific

In the defense policy document *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta discusses the central importance of the Asia-Pacific and provides an overview of how the Department will support U.S. interests in the region. While acknowledging that violent extremists in other parts of the world will continue to threaten U.S. security, he places greater weight on the importance of U.S. economic and security interests in the Asia-Pacific describing them as “inextricably linked to the developments” in the region.³⁰

As a result, he further states that the Defense Department will support the enduring national interests in the Asia-Pacific by emphasizing the six treaty alliance relationships, developing a long term strategic partnership with India as a regional

economic anchor and maritime security force, and maintaining peace in Korea by deterring and defending against North Korean actions.³¹ He also placed particular emphasis on our activities in relation to China in light of its potential to significantly impact our broader prosperity and security interests, either positively or negatively. Towards the former, the Secretary stated that both countries have a strong interest in Asia-Pacific stability and security and achieve this through a productive bilateral relationship. This relationship will allow us to work with China in ways consistent with our values and international order interests but also acknowledges that China's expanding power must be accompanied by increased transparency of its strategic purpose and direction to reduce unintended friction and undesirable confrontation.³²

During a January 5, 2012 briefing at the Pentagon, General Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reinforced the policy shift to the Asia-Pacific as imperative due to the shifts in strategic challenges from other parts of the world, stating, "all of the trends, demographic trends, geopolitical trends, economic trends and military trends are shifting towards the Pacific."³³ General Dempsey elaborated further in a February 19, 2012 interview with CNN reporter Fareed Zakaria, asserting that the military shift to the Asia-Pacific provides "more opportunity than liability to improve our relationship with China."³⁴ These statements underline the importance of this relationship to both prosperity and security in the region and for U.S. interests overall.

Army Secretary John McHugh provided the service his top priorities in a February 9, 2012 document articulating the requirement to enhance Army activities in the Asia-Pacific region to support America's refocused attention on the emerging nations of the Pacific Rim.³⁵ He further reinforced this policy shift with the perspective

that “the Army has always had a strong Pacific presence and sensitivity, given that seven of the ten largest armies in the world are located there.”³⁶ General Odierno, the Army Chief of Staff provided a concurring statement during February 23, 2012 remarks at a Defense Writers Group roundtable discussion, “If you added up the number of people, the Army has more people [deployed] over there than the Navy and the Air force.”³⁷ He also declared that the Army will remain strong in the region in support of the increased national emphasis and policy shift to the Asia-Pacific and that while the total number of U.S. Army Soldiers will be reduced in the years ahead as part of budget reductions, the Army will not reduce its presence in the region.³⁸ This presence will allow the U.S. Army to fulfill its roles within the Diplomacy, Development, and Defense framework to promote and protect U.S. national security and prosperity interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

The U.S. Army in the Asia-Pacific – Diplomacy, Development, and Defense

Prior to his retirement, Admiral Mike Mullen, then Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, offered in the 2011 National Military Strategy, that the ongoing geostrategic shifts in power and increasing global interconnectedness require “America’s foreign policy to employ an adaptive blend of diplomacy, development, and defense.”³⁹ In national government lexicon, these are known as the “3Ds” and are the three pillars that provide the foundation for promoting and protecting U.S. national security interests abroad.⁴⁰ Given the combatant command organizational structure of the Defense Department, the U.S. Army will conduct diplomatic, development, and defense activities in the Asia-Pacific region at the operational direction of the U.S. Pacific Command, the geographic combatant command with responsibility for military activities in the Asia-Pacific region.⁴¹

According to their unclassified website, the U.S Pacific Command mission is to protect and defend, in concert with other U.S. Government agencies, the territory of the U.S., its people, and its interests.⁴² It enhances stability in the region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and defeating enemies if necessary. Their approach is primarily based on partnership, presence, and military readiness and relies heavily on U.S. Army resources to conduct activities associated with these approaches.⁴³

The range of U.S. Army activities in the Asia-Pacific region is extensive. Among the many activities in the region, the long standing U.S. presence in Korea, Japan, and Thailand represent the diversity of activities supporting regional interests.⁴⁴ U.S. presence in South Korea has served as an effective deterrent to North Korean aggression for nearly 60 years. In Japan, U.S. and Japanese Defense Forces conduct the Keen series of biannual command post and field training exercises. These serve as the operational activities in support of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the two countries.⁴⁵ Cobra Gold, in Thailand, is one of the most comprehensive defense related activities in the Asia-Pacific region. Cobra Gold is the largest multilateral training exercise in Asia and includes participants from Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, the U.S., and the Republic of Korea. The exercise lasts approximately two weeks and includes a variety of realistic contemporary operating environment training scenarios incorporating command post, live fire, and peacekeeping events. Additionally, the event includes humanitarian assistance projects involving engineer and medical units to improve local communities and ultimately supports

prosperity, values, and security interests in activities that blend both defense and development lines of effort.⁴⁶

The July, 2011 Civil-Military Operations Guide, published by the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Military Affairs, acknowledges the differences in development, diplomacy, and defense functions but highlights that they are all necessary components of an effective whole-of-government approach to achieve U.S. policy goals.⁴⁷ In his July, 2008 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Dr. Rueben E. Brigety argued that the increasing involvement of U.S. Armed Forces in development assistance is, "one of the most profound changes in U.S. strategic thought and practice in at least a generation."⁴⁸ He further highlighted the direct links of development assistance to our national interests. First, "it supports long term stability," a prerequisite to prosperity and international order, by improving the economic prospects of developing countries and decreases the propensity to violent conflict in economically depressed and extremist areas.⁴⁹ Second, it directly supports our values by strengthening our moral leadership in the world and our ability to persuade others to support our policies.⁵⁰ Third, it provides an alternative to kinetic military actions against groups that may threaten the U.S. or our interests.⁵¹

The U.S. Army will conduct development missions as an interagency partner, primarily in support of other agency led efforts. The U.S. Agency for International Development categorizes interagency development field activities into four categories: short and long term; in either less permissive; or more permissive environments.⁵² Disaster response is the most likely a short term activity, both in permissive and non-permissive environments. Long term activities, in less permissive environments, are

inconsistent with the Secretary of Defense's recent guidance and should not be on the horizon for U.S. Army forces in the near future.⁵³ Long term activities in more permissive environments, such as recent efforts in the Philippines, serve as the most likely development related activity for U.S. land forces in the Asia-Pacific region. In the Philippine Island of Mindanao, Muslim insurgents threaten national stability due to historical poverty and discrimination. By combining USAID and military civil affairs project efforts, the interagency development team works to improve conditions over time and subsequently increase local and regional stability. This in turn supports broader U.S. security interests.⁵⁴

In her November, 2011 policy article, "America's Pacific Century", Secretary of State Hillary Clinton identified the imperative of building new partnerships to help solve common problems.⁵⁵ These new partnerships, with countries such as China, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and other emerging countries will help ensure diplomatic engagement towards a rules-based regional and global international order. This in turn will directly support stability and global trade, both cornerstones of our security and prosperity enduring national interests.⁵⁶ Both she and Secretary of Defense Panetta highlight the current tone of suspicion and friction that impedes diplomatic progress towards more cooperative relationships in the region.⁵⁷

Militarily, although the U.S. presence helps to ensure stability in the region, it can also be a counterproductive influence which supports Chinese misperceptions and suspicions. U.S. military activities on the Korean Peninsula, the Taiwan Straits, and areas in and around the South China Sea all relate to potential flashpoints for conflict. U.S. statements must be well thought out and include clearly transmitted intentions to

avoid misperceptions on the part of the Chinese. Theoretically, a coherent strategy must involve coordination across government departments. Policy and strategy developers in the Departments of State and Defense both should understand the significant impact that their actions may have upon achieving national objectives beyond their departmental role.⁵⁸ As stated earlier, military to military dialogue and relations are essential to increasing transparency and serving to set the conditions for broader cooperation in other areas. This however does not remove the potential for misunderstanding that is inherent in diplomacy and uncertainty.

These military to military discussions could be the basis for more substantial cooperation on shared interests such as non-traditional security threats. Professor S.R. Joey Long, a regional expert, argues that climate change, resource scarcity, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, famine, people smuggling, drug trafficking, and transnational crime are all threats that transcend international boundaries and therefore require bilateral and multilateral approaches.⁵⁹ Military to military dialogue on these topics as security issues would best be done without the pressure to arrive at solutions initially and may help foster broader positive diplomatic interaction.⁶⁰

Beyond non-traditional security threats, the immediate threat of terrorism may provide a common interest allowing for military to military discussion and subsequent cooperation between regional states. Paul Smith, a professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval War College offers that, “The United States and China have the greatest potential to constructively influence Pakistan’s counterterrorism posture.”⁶¹ Although this approach would transcend combatant command boundaries and require

the top-down conditions setting dialogue, it warrants consideration as an opportunity for military involvement in a diplomatic approach to security affairs. Whether through diplomatic, development, or traditional defense lines of effort, the U.S. Army provides the Pacific Command a wide range of opportunities to further U.S. prosperity and security interests in the region. However, the rebalancing to the Pacific comes with challenges for the Army as it concludes ten years of hard effort in the Middle East.

The U.S. Army –Challenges Associated with the Shift to the Asia-Pacific Region

The U.S Army is a critical and an integral component to the successful prosecution of U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific region; however, unlike the previous policy course change to the Middle-East, a drop, rather than an increase in funding, will serve as a point of friction as the Army adjusts course to the Asia-Pacific region. Unlike in 2003, when the nation invested heavily in the costs associated with expanding Middle-East engagement and the Army's prosecution of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the economic crisis that led to the Asia-Pacific policy shift will simultaneously frustrate the Army's efforts as it executes the rebalance in a fiscally austere environment.

As the Defense Department's primary agent for land operations, the U.S. Army is responsible for manning, equipping, and training forces to deploy and conduct operations in pursuit of national policy ends. In 2003, the Army was manned, equipped, and trained to fight and win against conventional threats and generated forces through a tiered readiness model. The Army superbly fulfilled its purpose by defeating Iraq's conventional forces in six weeks. Then, in the face of a difficult insurgency, the Army adjusted its formations and force generation process to meet the demands of a sustained counter-insurgency fight. The Army was able to make these course adjustments relatively quickly due to a nearly one hundred billion dollar infusion of

funding, a twenty five percent increase, between 2003 and 2005.⁶² By 2006, with an additional twenty five billion dollars over the previous year, the Secretary of the Army approved the cyclical Army Force Generation model as the core process to meet the sustained demand for trained and ready forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁶³ Herein lies the principal challenge and source of friction; instead of hundreds of billions of dollars in funding increases, the Army must adjust its course from efforts in the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region with over a hundred billion dollars less than the previous year's outlays.⁶⁴ This challenge is a Gordian knot, an exceedingly complicated problem, due to several factors to include: maintaining up to seven brigade combat teams in Afghanistan through 2014; reducing the total number of brigade combat teams from forty five to between thirty two and thirty seven by 2017; and, generating the requisite amount of trained and ready brigade combat teams to meet the needs of the newly directed Asia-Pacific policy as well as our other global commitments.⁶⁵

Several senior Army officials have discussed these challenges and proposed approaches to resolve them. "I am finding it harder to turn this 1.1 million man Army in a direction," stated Army Chief of Staff, General Odierno, in late February, 2012, at the Association of the United States Army Winter Symposium in Florida.⁶⁶ He continued by articulating the challenges of "a very large deficit problem, and we also know that sustaining the strength of the economy is a national security issue."⁶⁷ General Odierno also reiterated the imperative of meeting our current commitments in Afghanistan while simultaneously adjusting how the Army organizes, mans, equips, and trains the force to "be more responsive for the Combatant Commanders," all while managing an 80,000 man reduction in the force.⁶⁸ Additionally, the Chief of Staff briefly described a new

brigade combat team model, a new force generation model, and a focus on a possible training rotation program in the Asia-Pacific region in particular.⁶⁹ Cumulatively, these challenges are staggering and reinforce the difficulty of changing course within a large organization like the Department of Defense.

At the same symposium, General Cone, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Commander, discussed the nature of the threat and the Army's imperatives as preliminary points before elaborating on General Odierno's discussion topics.⁷⁰ He described the threat in terms of hybrid strategies employed by potential adversaries consisting of a wide range of conventional and irregular capabilities, the employment of proxies, and terrorist and criminal activities.⁷¹ In light of these hybrid threats and the overall nature of the geostrategic environment in the Asia-Pacific and elsewhere, General Cone communicated three primary Army imperatives: Prevent conflict by maintaining credibility and avoiding miscalculation, Shape the environment through sustained relationships and regional stability, and Win, both decisively and dominantly.⁷² General Cone then elaborated on General Odierno's discussion on new approaches to brigade combat team force generation models and unit rotation programs. These considerations include a brigade combat team redesign that adds a third battalion and engineer capabilities, and regionally aligns units with specific geographic combatant command areas of responsibility. These regionally aligned units would rotate to their aligned areas of responsibility during their available phase of the Army Force Generation model.⁷³ This last point, the rotation of regionally aligned units to their respective areas, is a key component to addressing the Gordian knot dilemmas of cost, readiness, and the shift in support of the Asia-Pacific policy.

As the Army strives to perform its missions under increasing fiscal austerity, it must seek out ways to get more from each dollar spent. One of the most interesting and potentially profitable initiatives towards this end is the regionally aligned training and force generation model discussed by Generals Odierno and Cone at the Association of the United States Army Winter Symposium. Early in the force generation process, during the reset phase, units will be assigned a regionally aligned focus area and then will dispatch all or portions of the formation to that region during the training phase. Prior to the training deployment, units will conduct planning activities with the designated combatant command, gaining familiarity of the culture, threats, and operating environment. Once deployed, the rotational force will conduct training, multi-lateral exercises, and develop partner capacity.⁷⁴ These activities are inherently consistent with the diplomacy, development, and defense framework described earlier.

Furthermore, this helps to reduce strategic risk during the transition out of U.S. Afghanistan commitments over the next two years and the requirement to provide forces in support of the Asia-Pacific policy shift. Upon redeployment, instead of sequentially conducting a full reset, train, and ready cycle prior to availability, a brigade combat team could be employed in support of: a deterrence mission in Korea; a multilateral training exercise in Thailand; or a humanitarian assistance mission in Indonesia; as part of its training phase. This provides more capability for dollars spent and allows for a quicker turn to the Asia-Pacific region.

Conclusion

Given the previous decade of focus on the Middle East and the associated economic burdens it has created, President Obama's redirection of U.S. policy to the Asia-Pacific serves as the way out of the global financial crisis and assures a requisite

level of stability and security in the region. The U.S. Army's efforts to adjust course from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific must serve the policy approaches outlined by the U.S. administration's six key lines of action: strengthening bilateral security alliances; forging a broad-based military presence; deepening relations with emerging powers, including China; engaging within regional multilateral institutions; expanding trade and influence; and, advancing human rights.⁷⁵ Additionally, the Army's efforts must be accomplished in a time of reduced defense spending and while still continuing to complete the mission in Afghanistan. These challenges are difficult, but surmountable. The creative and mutually supporting approaches outlined by our Army's Leaders and carried out by our Soldiers and their families will serve as the inputs necessary to turn the metaphorical aircraft carrier effectively towards a more prosperous path.

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